

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

January 15, 2015

Commission Members Present:

Genevieve Walker-Lightfoot
Ivette Lopez
Rev. Turner
Tim Johnson
Opel T. Jones, I
Ilene Kessler
Bianca Chang
Giovanna Guarnieri

Commission Members Absent:

H. Taylor Walls
Frank V. Eastham, Jr.
Sal Hussain

Staff:

Stephanie M. Chapple, Recording Secretary
Mary Campbell, Acting OHR Administrator
Barry Sanders, HRC Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – Carl DeLorenzo, County Executive’s Office; David Lee, County Executive’s Office and Cheryl Brower, OHR Investigator

3. HRC CASES UPDATE – LEGAL COUNSEL – N/A

4. APPROVE MINUTES

December meeting minutes were approved.

5. Chair’s Report –

Genevieve welcomed guests from the County Executive’s Office and OHR. Approval of December minutes and committee reports will be given following the public forum discussion.

6. COMMITTEES/ REPORTS

- *Finance and Fair Lending – Genevieve* – No report.
- *Legislation – Ivette and Genevieve* – Ivette viewed the website, and did not see anything of interest before the Maryland Assembly.
- *Education & Community Outreach – Frank, Rev. Turner* – Beth Shalom Synagogue will hold its annual Dr. Martin Luther King/ Rabbi Herschel Celebration on Friday, January 16, 2015 at 7 pm. A community dialogue centered around civil rights then and now, reflections on the movie Selma, and police & community relations will be held at St. John Baptist Church on Saturday, January 17, 2015. Howard County Deputy Police Chief, representative from the State’s Attorney’s Office, members of the faith community and members of the HRC will serve on the panel.
- *Law Enforcement – Opel & Tim* – Tim serves on the Circle of Restorative Initiatives. This group is looking into the possibility of establishing dialogue between community citizens and police personnel to offer better solutions in building trust between the 2 groups. Tim and Opel will reach out to the county’s Police Department to begin plans for a possible dialogue series. Tim will circulate questions for a possible survey via email with all members.
- *HRC Awards Program – Ivette and Bianca* – No report
- *Human Trafficking Task Force – Genevieve* – There will be a forum on 1/31/15, 9–3pm, open to the public. Gen will email flier to all members.
- *LGBTQ Committee – Catherine* – Catherine will contact Freestate Legal to draft something to share with and get input from Commissioners for possible recommendations to the County Council regarding banning reparative therapy in Howard County.
- *Housing – Ivette and Ilene* – Ilene serves on a focus group with the Nat’l Assoc of Realtors who initiated a process to view fair housing cases all over the country with the new set of protected classes. This process will also come to Howard County; Ilene will confirm when this happens. FYI from Ilene – The President worked with HUDD to reduce mortgage interest on FHA loans from 1.39 to .85 starting now.
- *Aging & Disability Matters – Bianca, Genevieve* (**New Committee**)
- *Health Care Access – Bianca* (**New Committee**)

7. STUDENT REPORT – Giovanna and Taylor are working together on a number of high school student projects and the HRC student ambassador program. Updates will be shared at the February meeting.

8. STAFF REPORT/UPDATES –

- The Howard County Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Commission program will be held on **Sunday, January 18, 2015** at Howard Community College's Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center – Smith Theatre; the reception will begin at 2 p.m., program begins at 3 p.m.
- OHR & the Howard County Association of Realtors will conduct Fair Housing training on February 4, 2015 for Realtors. This training will focus on Howard County fair housing laws, which is different from state and federal laws.
- OHR will give monthly report of cases, total number of cases, number of new cases, number of cases closed, and number of cases before the HRC. etc. to the County Executive.
- New employee/Intake Investigator joined OHR staff. Linda Taylor joined OHR in December; she is a certified mediator, as well as all of the OHR Investigators.
- 2016 Fiscal budget is due on Feb 9th to the County Executive. Mary will forward information regarding the HRC budget to the Chair on Friday.

9. NEW BUSINESS – N/A

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES –

- Opel expressed continuing a good working relationship between OHR and HRC.
- HRC Chair or Vice Chair will formally invite Dr. Gray to a future HRC meeting to thank him for his years of service.

II. ADJOURNMENT – The Chair adjourned meeting at 9:42 p.m.